

## 9/08/2008 This Week in Congress

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September 8, 2008

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

### Giving Keynote Address at Rooks County Health Center Dedication

On Sunday, I was in my hometown of Plainville to present the keynote address at the dedication and open house for the Rooks County Health Center (RCHC). In 2006, the RCHC board, administration, staff and hospital district voting members decided it was more beneficial to build a new hospital instead of expanding the old facility. Community hospitals are tremendously important to the health and well-being of citizens and help attract young families into the areas. This opportunity arose from the community coming together to pass a bond that issued securing funds to build the new hospital. When Kansans work together, we can create successful solutions that benefit everyone.

The new hospital is 59,410 square feet and is double the size of the original facility. It will offer new and expanded health care services including a new laboratory, new radiology services and two labor and delivery suites. It is often easier to recruit and retain medical staff when hospital facilities are improved and modernized.

It was a pleasure to visit with so many hometown friends at the event. A special thank you to the following individuals for their leadership and for organizing this event: Julie Price, CEO; Bill Stahl, COO and RCHC staff members. I also thank the hospital board members: Charlie Allphin, Chuck Comeau, Sheila Hachmeister, Jeff Van Dyke and Jon Voss. [Click here to see photos of the event.](#)

#### Joining in the Kick-Off for the 2008 Kansas State Fair

I spent time on Friday and Saturday at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. The opening weekend at the Kansas State Fair is something I look forward to each year and attending is always helpful for me to learn more about the issues important to Kansans. The issues people visited with me about were about the high cost of gas and the presidential election this fall. I would like to commend the Fair Board for their efforts in organizing yet another great year at the fair.

The fair is the largest single event in the state, attracting approximately 350,000 people from all 105 Kansas counties and surrounding states.

Members of my staff will continue to be on hand this week at my information booth in the Pride of Kansas Building. I look forward to returning to the fairgrounds next weekend.

Annual Kansas Farm Bureau Breakfast: I began the day Saturday by joining Kansas agricultural leaders at the annual Kansas Farm Bureau Legislative Leadership Breakfast at the Grand Prairie Hotel in Hutchinson. I was joined by Senators Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts, Congressman Todd Tiahrt, Kansas Farm Bureau President Steve Baccus and farmers and ranchers from across the state.

Specifically, I talked about the need for Congress to pass comprehensive energy legislation to reduce burdening energy costs that are affecting the price of groceries, food and fertilizer. I discussed that as Congress reconvenes this week, we need to do everything possible to pass a comprehensive energy plan. I also explained that the 2008 Farm Bill contained a technical mistake regarding farmers who can apply for USDA programs. I will be introducing legislation in September to correct this mistake.

#### Visiting Larned Community

On Friday, I visited Larned community in Pawnee County. While there, I visited the Larned Courthouse, City Hall, Chamber of Commerce, the Larned Tiller & Toiler newspaper, Unified School District 495 offices and Reep Real Estate. Thank you to the members of their community who were able to talk with me during my visit.

#### Visiting Bayer Animal Health Headquarters

This Wednesday, I paid a call to a very important Kansas company when I visited the Bayer Animal Health headquarters

in Shawnee Mission. Bayer Animal Health primarily focuses on providing animals with medication to safeguard and prolong their lives, and on providing their owners with the education and tools to better protect them. During the visit, I learned their headquarters employs more than 400 employees locally and has 130 sales representatives and veterinarians in the field.

Bayer is located within America's Animal Health Corridor, which is the largest concentration of animal health and nutrition interests in the world. In total, Kansas City area companies account for nearly 34 percent of total sales in the \$16.8 billion global animal health market. One mission of the Animal Health Division is to improve the area's chances of bringing even more companies and their investments to enhance the global Animal Health Corridor. The state of Kansas has supported the growth of the corridor by integrating state collegiate programs that network Kansas college students with the companies within the corridor. The value of Bayer's efforts and activity is bringing strength to the corridor and is helping to make Kansas the international headquarters for animal science.

#### Visiting Prescription Solutions

On Wednesday, I also visited Prescription Solutions in Overland Park. Prescription Solutions, an approved Medicare provider and licensed pharmacy offering home-delivered and Medicare-reimbursed medical supplies, employs 150 people with a payroll of 55 million. The company focuses on making health care affordable and also improving access to health and wellness. Prescription Solutions is the sole provider for AARP Medical Supply Services. I would like to thank Andrew Jones, a good friend from Lacrosse and Jarred Forbes for help in setting up the visit. Thanks to Frank Whitchurch, Charles Porter, Nicholas Weisen and Rick Wasson for hosting the tour.

#### Learning About Great Plains Energy and Kansas City Power and Light

Also on Wednesday, I had the opportunity to learn more about Kansas City Power & Light (KCP&L). The company

operates out of Kansas City, Missouri, and has evolved into a full-service energy provider. I was able to visit with Mike Chesser, Chairman and CEO of KCP&L and Bill Downey, President and COO of KCP&L about KCP&L's commitment to renewable energy. They have plans to add another 400 megawatts of wind as part of their comprehensive energy plan.

KCP&L services more than 800,000 customers in 47 northwestern Missouri and eastern Kansas counties - a service territory of approximately 18,000 square miles from the northern border to the southern border of Kansas. The company delivers power that requires 3,300 miles of transmission lines, close to 25,000 miles of distribution lines and 322 sub-stations. In fall of 2006, the Spearville Wind Generation Facility was brought online with KCP&L to provide 100.5 megawatts of renewable energy to the service territory. Wolf Creek Generating Station is one of KCP&L's principal generating units and represents about 14 percent of the company's generating capacity.

As we look toward America's future energy needs, wind power will be a part of the solution. I reiterated to the KCP&L staff my commitment to continue pressuring Congress to pass the extension of the production tax credit to those that own a wind farm. If this extension is not passed, additional wind investments in western Kansas and elsewhere will be postponed. Thanks to Paul Snider, Manager of Government Affairs for his help in setting up the visit.

#### Attending Mayor's Forum

While in Kansas City, I attended the Mayors' Forum on Wednesday evening. Mayors attending the event included: Jeff Meyers of Shawnee; Laura McConwell of Mission; Carl Gerlach of Overland Park; Mike Copeland of Olathe; Mark Squires of Spring Hill; Dave Anderson of DeSoto; Allen Roth of Westwood Hills; Carol Lehman of Gardner; David Fromm of Mission Hills; John St. Clair of Fairway; Ron Shaffer of Prairie Village; and Clausie Smith of Bonner Springs.

Also attending were Bob Lee of Lake Quivira; Chairman Annabeth Surbaugh; and the Johnson County Board of Commissioners. It was also good to see Carol Gonzales who is the Shawnee City Manager. Thanks to the Overland Park

staff members, DJ Curtis and Erik Sartorius.

#### Touring MGP Ingredients, Inc. in Atchison

I toured the MGP Ingredients, Inc. facility in Atchison on Thursday and met with company executives to learn more about the work they do. Using locally-grown grain, MGP Ingredients is a fully-integrated producer of ingredients and distillery products. The company produces mill feed and distillers feed as by-products of its manufacturing processes. The company's scientists focus their expertise on developing highly functional ingredients that provide benefits to customers and to the consumer. MGP Ingredients employs nearly 500 workers at its facilities in Atchison, Kansas City and Onaga in Kansas and in locations in Illinois.

MGP employees are highly educated and well-trained, with many coming from right here in Kansas. We have always looked for ways to enhance agriculture production in our state and to promote jobs off the farm, so I was very pleased with MGP's involvement with both of these efforts. Thanks to President and CEO Tim Newkirk for inviting me on the tour.

#### Speaking to Rotary Club Members in Atchison

While in Atchison on Thursday, I spoke at the Atchison Rotary Club meeting about the need for Congress to pass comprehensive energy legislation. I was also able to talk to community leaders about other topics that will be on the national agenda when Congress reconvenes this month. As a fellow Rotarian, I always enjoy meeting with other Rotary members in Kansas. Several members of the local Kiwanis Club also attended. Thanks to President Bill Murphy for inviting me to speak.

## Service Academy Nominations

This fall I will have the opportunity of making appointments to the United States Service Academies. If you are currently a senior in high school and are interested in attending West Point, the Merchant Marine Academy, the Air Force Academy, or the Naval Academy, please contact my Hutchinson district office for an application packet and deadline information. Qualified applicants will be interviewed by my Service Academy Selection Board on Saturday, October 11th at the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center.

## In the Office

Lolita Baker of Hutchinson and Galen Green of Larned, representing the McPherson Foods Resource Bank, visited the office to discuss about their current project and the importance of matching funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development. They also received a Capitol tour during their visit.

Very truly yours,

Jerry